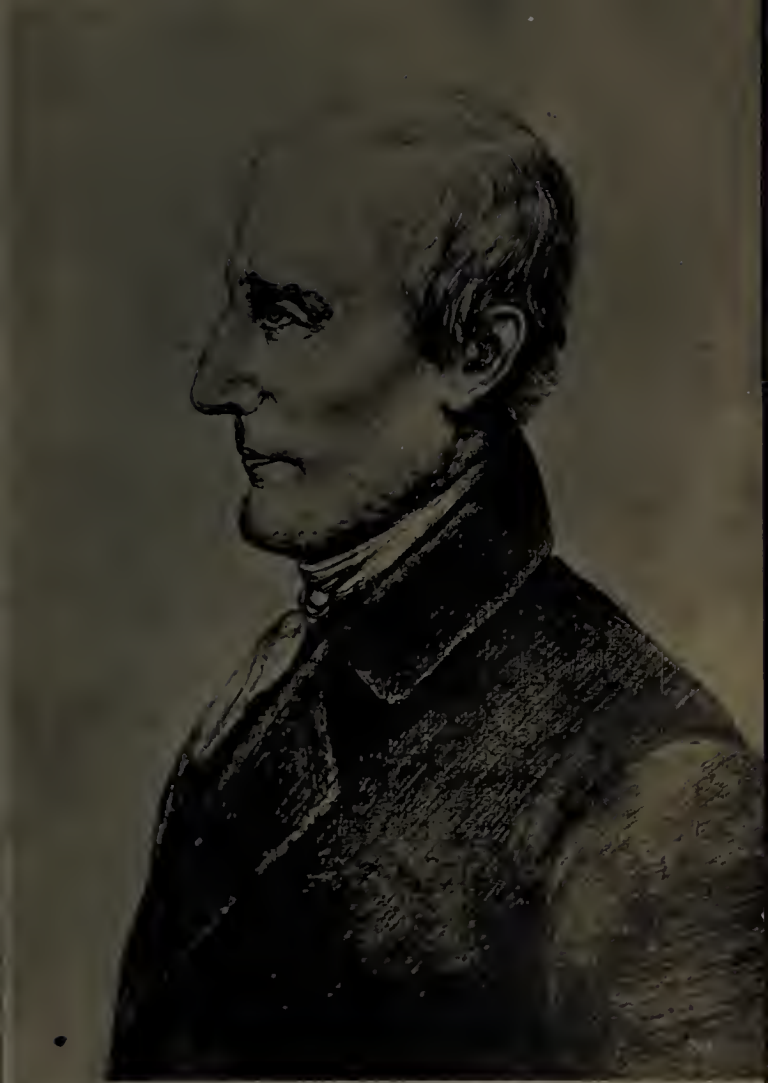

Rev. Jesse Head

Who married President Lincoln's parents.

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No. I.

Life Sketch Rev. Jesse Head, Who Married President Lincoln's Parents.

In the savage-infested days of the District of Kentucky when the Indian wigwams were often in sight, and when the roads were only paths trimmed wider from the existing traces, or roads, beaten down by the travel of wild animals; the itinerant preacher was about in the trackless forest proclaiming to the settlers a salvation that will abide until judgment day. The big hearted and noble pioneers were so overjoyed at the coming of an itinerant preacher that when one did visit the settlement and preach a sermon from two to three hours in length, it was a great occasion.

Rev. Jesse Head in the infant hours of the newly formed State, and of Washington County-- first county formed after admission --encountered as many dangers, and preached as realistic a gospel as any valiant messenger in the service. His benevolence included the good of the whole human race.

These six sketches will endeavor to give the recorded events found in the Washington County Court, or elsewhere, concerning Jesse Head as a Magistrate, and will also review his ministerial career as a champion for truth. He dispensed the decisions of law, necessary to his office of Magistrate, with eminent ability and perfect justice; and his amiable and concilitory temper enabled him to exert a substantial influence in helping establish the cause of Christianity within the confines of the newly formed State.

It has been a far flight of time since the days when Rev. Jesse Head was protected from the murderous Indians by a sentinel armed with the long barrel flint-lock rifle; while the good man discoursed to the settlers congregated within the fort; down to the year of 1921, and in consequence of such lapse of time, tradition must be depended upon, in some instances, to complete a review.

The fact that Rev. Jesse Head performed the marriage ceremony on June 12, 1806, that united President Lincoln's parents, which record of said marriage was lost, and not unearthed until 72 years thereafter; and when the

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world believed for over three generations that no marriage had in fact boen performed, such discovery of the genuine record by W.F. Booker court official, immortalized the name of Rev. Jesse Head in the riches of hsitorical recital. The earliest events of record concerning Rev.Jesse Head are as follows -

Rev. Jesse Head was born near Baltimore, Md. on Jan. 28, 1760, and at the age of 22 years was married to Miss Jane Ramsey,of Bedford County, Penn. His children, and their births will be given in the next sketch.

Discussing Rev. Jesse Head, it appears he came to Kentucky and first set tled upon a farm of "50 acres of second rate land, situted on Road Run" some distance from Springfield, Washington County. This above farm of Jesse Head's was located in the midst of the "Lincoln's and Berry's". Rev. Jesse Head obtained the aforesaid farm from Benjamin Hardin,and the latter originally was the locater of the land. Of course,the "50 acres" was a portion sold off by Benjamin Hardin from a large survey patented by Benjamin Hardin from the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1784. The aforesaid Benjamin Hardin was not the lawyer of that name. Later in life Rev. Jesse Head when almost constantly engaged in cabinet work, in deposition taking, and also having a license to preach,much of his time was used in religous work, consequently he removed from his farm and took up a permanent residence in Springfield. This removal must have been in March 1798, because in a Court Martial proceeding, May 1798, Jesse Head being a witness for one "John Brazelton", mentions his (Head) residence "now in Springfield,Ky".

In 1797 and 1799 Rev. Jesse Head have the following assessment list: "April 18, 1797. 50 acres second rate land, upon Road Run, original patent obtained in name of Benjamin Hardin. Horse 1".

Some where in these assessment lists, the exact one I can not state,upon the line on which appears the name of "Jesse Head", and in the column wherein is designated in the said asessment "horses or mares",some person in a spirit of mischief, no doubt, in a different ink, opposite the word "mare" wrote "gra", which I take to mean that Jesse Head's

stead was a "gra"(y) mare.

"June I, 1799. Assessment list of Jesse Head. Same 50 acres. And in addition is listed " 2 town lots, horses 2". The old patriot in two long years acquired "two town lots" and an extra" horse" to his fortune. I venture the opinion, although unable to prove it, that the extra "horse" was the "gray mare's" colt. But bear in mind, he was a Methodist preacher, poor in this world's goods, but rich in the Spirit of God.

In 1799 "Bigger Head" died in Washington County, and he left a widow "Priscilla". I believe "Bigger" and "Jesse" were brothers, yet when we see the fact that "Bigger" left 200 acres of land and "negroes 2", the mind is not clear upon the point. Rev. Jesse Head was opposed to slavery in all forms, and among others endeavored to get a provision in Kentucky's Constitution, prohibiting slavery.

The various orders concerning Jesse Head found in the Washington County Court, (Ky) are as follows :

"Nov. 7, 1797. Ordered that the Clerk (of the court) bind David Rodman, orphan of Alexander Rodman deceased, to Jesse Head to learn the art of a cabinet maker. The said David to stay with the said Head for three and a half years, and said Head to find him in victuals and one pair of shoes a year, and at his freedom said Head to find him a jointer, foreplane, jack and a smoothing plane". While this good man seemed a little short on shoes, yet a pair a year was then the custom.

"Jan 6, 1798. Jesse Head produced in court a commission authenticated as the law requires appointing the said Jesse Head a Justice of the Peace for Washington (County) and took the. oath of office before Trammel Hichman" (Clerk).

(To be continued April 8, 1921).

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ARTICLE IN THE LEBANON, (KY.,) ENTERPRISE, APRIL 8, 1921.

Life Sketches of Rev. Jesse Head, Who Married President Lincoln's Parents

BY L. S. PENCE.

An error in the first sketch concerning the birth of Rev. Jesse Head calls for an exact copy as follows (hand write of Rev. Jesse Head):

"Jesse Head, son of William Edward Head, was born June 10, 1768, in Frederick county, Maryland."

"Jane Ramsey, daughter of Robert and Susanah Ramsey, born April 19, 1772, in Bedford county, Penn."

"Jesse Head and Jane Ramsey were married by Rev. Bruce on Jan. 9, 1789."

Issue of Rev. Jesse and Jane Head:

"William Edward Head, b. Feb. 19, 1790, baptised by Rev. Michael Land."

"Jane Smith Head, b. April 29, 1792, bap. by Rev. Simmons," married Wm. H. Linney.

"Robert Head, b. June 24, 1794, bap. by Rev. Thomas Wilkerson (died young).

"John Head, b. August 24, 1796, bap. by Rev. Thomas Wilkerson."

"Jesse Thompson Head, b. December 29, 1798, bap. by Rev. John Page."

"Susanah Ramsey Head, b. May 22, 1803, bap. by Rev. Wm. McKendre."

"George McKendre Head, b. August 22, 1805, bap. by Rev. Wm. Burke."

"Thomas Jefferson Head, b. September 5, 1807, bap. by Rev. Wm. Burke."

"Mathew Walton Head, b. September 11, 1809, bap. by Rev. Chas. Halliday."

"Mary Head, b. December 30, 1810, bap. by Rev. Wm. McKendre."

"Harriett Wilde Head, b. November 16, 1812, bap. by Rev. Chas. Halliday," married VerBryke.

"Edward Bascom Head, b. June 1, 1817, bap. by Rev. Wm. McKendre," married Mary Minter.

The research for the grandchildren, great grand children and even the great great grandchildren of Rev. Jesse and Jane Head has been only partially successful. In fact, to accomplish the undertaking to find them all would necessarily require the services of a stenographer for a space of weeks. In the research just finished I must acknowledge the politeness of all interrogated, and thank each for the courtesy in giving whatever facts they possessed.

I am gratified to announce that Mrs. Sidney Elizabeth Brown, a granddaughter of Rev. Jesse Head is still alive, hale and hearty, at the age of 75 years, at her home in Indiana. Her father was Edward Bascom Head, who was a printer and located many years ago in Harrodsburg, Ky., but a few years after the death of his eminent father, he joined the "Head hosts" in their journeyings to the west. Mrs. Brown was born in Harrodsburg, Ky. She is the mother of four daughters and two sons. Also she has several grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Mrs. Brown has from her girlhood days kept the faith of Methodism. For the valuable aid extended me by Mrs. Brown and her daughters I am grateful.

It is due that I especially mention two great great granddaughters of Rev. Jesse Head and wife, namely: Mrs. D. M. Hutton and Miss Birdie Linney. The former is the wife of the owner of the "Herald" at Harrodsburg, Ky. To Miss Linney I am indebted for the information that lead to my finding the true facts relative to Rev. Jesse Head. Their father was Marcus Linney, who was for many years the capable assistant to Hon. John R. Proctor, State Geologist. As such assistant, Marcus Linney made valuable research and extended the range of investigation to high success in that office. The State Historical Register, in its January, 1921, number, published an extended sketch of Marcus Linney.

Many of the children of Rev. Jesse Head and wife, after the death of their devoted parents, moved to Illinois and Indiana. I am inclined to the firm belief their purpose in going west was to follow their childhood friends — the Lincoln children. Children of Josiah Lincoln, Mordica Lincoln and Thomas Lincoln. The early voices of these children mingled in youthful merriment along the rugged banks of "Road Run."

It appears that Edward Bascom Head, the printer son of Rev. Jesse Head, is the only one of his children that I have succeeded in obtaining a complete list. His wife was Mary Minter (married 1835) and their issue follows:

(1) Sarah Jane Head, married Peter Brown. (2) James Lowell Head, married Laura Linney. (3) Jesse McKendre Head, died unmarried. (4) Robert Ferguson Head, married Josephine Randall. (5) Edward Bascom Head, married a widow, Mrs. Carter. (6) Sidney Elizabeth Head, married Nicholas Brown. (7) LaFayette Marshall Head, died unmarried. (8) Mary Ellen Head, died unmarried. (9) William Trainer Head, married Elizabeth Freeman. In the foregoing list I have made mention of Mrs. Nicholas Brown. I shall refer briefly to Rev. Edward Bascom Head, who was a presiding elder in the Kentucky Methodist Conference in 1881-2. He served as postmaster at Harrodsburg, Ky., for several years. He died in 1886, aged 44, while attending a session of the Methodist Conference at Winchester, Ky. He left a son and a daughter, both are living and married. If it could be possible, I would like to see a complete family tree from Rev. Jesse Head and wife until the year 1921. However, if any branch of this family wish recognition, and will furnish a true list to the writer, they will be given a place at the beginning of the third sketch.

The list copied at the beginning of this sketch, containing the names and dates of the births of the children of Rev. Jesse Head and wife, was written down, over a century ago, by the hand of Rev. Jesse Head for the information of all future generations of his family. The family record also shows who "baptised' each child, and today such list bespeaks ministers of the Gospel that time long ago erased from the face of the earth. Such family record also reminds the reader that Rev. Jesse Head named a son "Mathew Walton" after the pre-eminent Commander of the 4th Regiment Kentucky Militia, Colonel Mathew Walton; one of the best and purest moral men of pioneer days in Washington county. When Washington was formed in 1792, Governor Isaac Shelby established Mathew Walton at the head of the first court, and made him "Chancellor" in equity. Many writers have touched upon the splendid life of Mathew Walton. The Rev. Jesse Head knew men from every angle of their worth, and impelled by that foundation of friendship and worth for such an eminent commander, named his son for said excellent pioneer. Rev. Jesse Head was the friend of every good cause, and was among the many early advocates for abolishing slavery in the new-born State of Kentucky at its first Constitutional Convention.

In the first sketch the suggestion was indulged that likely "Biggar Head, Sr.," and Rev. Jesse Head were brothers. Such is not the fact. In the settlement of "Biggar Head's" estate (1799) the fact is shown that the latter came from North Carolina to "Nelson county" in 1790. We find that William Edward Head died in Washington county in November 1798; and it is probable that the decedent and Rev. Jesse Head were brothers, because the fact will be recalled that Rev. Jesse Head's father was "William Edward Head," and it might be consistently believed that the decedent, William Edward Head, who died in Washington county, was named for his own father (and Rev. Jesse Head's) back yonder in Frederick county, Maryland. The aforesaid suggestion may be reenforced when the record of the Washington County Court on April 2, 1799, shows that William Edward Head age (16) and Thomas Edward Head (age 14), infant sons of decedent William Edward Head, came into the court and made "choice of Jesse Head as guardian" of their small estate. Said court order also further reads in this language: "Ordered that the clerk (of the court) bind William Edward Head and Thomas Edward Head, orphans of William Edward Head, deceased, to Jesse Head to learn the art of a cabinet maker according to law, and said Jesse Head to learn the said apprentices to read and write and cipher to the rule of three, and said Jesse Head is to furnish wearing apparel and also find them in victuals." As before stated, I am of the opinion that Rev. Jesse Head was the uncle of the aforesaid orphan boys. Be it ever said to the memory of Rev. Jesse Head as far as the court orders show that he was faithful and sincere to every trust. "Our own heart, and not other men's opinions, forms our true honor."

Again Thomas Edward Head, who was one of the early jailers of Washington county, had a son named Richard Berry Head, and it is probable that Thomas Edward Head married a daughter of old man Richard Berry, Sr., and the fact will be brought to mind that Richard Berry's, Sr., wife was an aunt to Miss Nancy Hanks, and Thomas Lincoln married Nancy Hanks and Rev. Jesse Head united Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks in the bonds of matrimony (June 12, 1806), so it would baffle a Phiadelphia lawyer to unearth just exactly how the Heads, Hanks, Berrys and Lincolns were intermingled in the sphere of relationship in the pioneer days of Washington county.

This ends the Rev. Jesse Head family research unless some branch sends in the list pertaining to that definite branch for the beginning of the third sketch.

(To be continued May 13, 1921.)

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ARTICLE IN THE LEBANON, (KY.,) ENTERPRISE, MAY 13, 1921.

Life Sketches of Rev. Jesse Head, Who Married President Lincoln's Parents

BY L. S. PENCE.

Going back and taking up the orders of the Washington County Court where the same were left off in the first sketch, these orders continue as follows:

"Feb. 6, 1798. A certificate that Jesse Head, Esquire, hath taken the oath of office (as Magistrate) in this county was returned in words and figures as follows: Jan. 27, 1798. Jesse Head appeared before me, a Justice of the Peace for Washington (county), and produced a commission authenticated as the law requires, appointing said Jesse Head a Justice of the Peace for Washington (county) and took the oath required by law previous to his entering said office. Given under my hand the day and year aforesaid. E. Trammell Hickman, Justice of the Peace."

"April 3, 1798. Ordered that Jesse Head and Josiah Wilson, Esquires, state and settle the accounts of Samuel Grundy, sheriff of this county, for the years of 1796 and 1797 and make report."

"May 2, 1798. Ordered and directed that Jesse Head and Benjamin Piles, Esquires, be and they are requested to employ some person to erect stocks, pillory and a whipping post upon the public square in Springfield (Ky.) for the use of this county." The above named "Benjamin Piles" was peculiarly gifted to the making of criminal implements in pioneer days as appears thus: "Feb. 5, 1795. Ordered that the sheriff pay Benjamin Piles nine shillings for making a pair of hand cuffs."

"May 12, 1798. Washington County Court of Quarter Sessions." In the appeal case of John Shackleford versus John Davis, on an appeal from a judgment entered by Jesse Head, Magistrate, it appears that the Appellate Court set aside as void the judgment rendered by Jesse Head as Magistrate. This is the only occasion, as far as my research extends, where the Appellate Court upset any judgment of the old patriot.

"May 25, 1798." Two events of especial interest in the life of Rev. Jesse Head are recorded at the above date. In the first event he speaks of his devoted wife, and this will be passed until the fourth sketch, where Jane (Ramsey) Head, wife of Rev. Jesse Head, will be paid a tribute. The second event is copied from an aged book in my possession, entitled: "Court Martials in Nelson-Washington county," beginning "July 15, 1791," when Nelson county included Washington, and when Virginia included all said territory. After Washington county was formed —and it was the first piece of territory ever named for George Washington—this Court Martial some years later (after setting up the commencement order) made the following order concerning Jesse Head, to-wit:—

"Page 61. At a Court Martial for the assessemnt of fines for the fourth regiment of Kentucky Militia at Springfield (Ky.) the 25th day of May, 1798. Present, Major Mathew Walton, president. Richard McDonald, Mordica Lincoln, Elija Faris and Richard Berry, Captains. Charles Hayden, Lieutenant. Jesse Rice and John Hays, Ensigns." (Ten trials ———then)—

"Page 62. **Jesse Head returned as delinquent is cleared of (off) muster role, he having a license to preach according to the rules of the sect to which he belongs.**"

The historical significance surrounding this ancient order invites investigation. Like all orders written in early times, while no doubt plain in meaning to the pioneers, yet its compactness blurs its direct understanding to our minds. In my judgment the result of the acts performed under the terms of the ancient order —what said order accomplished—is better calculated to unlock its true meaning than the frailty of its wording. Many readers who casually observe the above ancient order will form the conclusion that Jesse Head held "a license to preach" as an exhorter, that is to say, in the nature of an appeal to the pioneers to forsake their sins; but not in the capacity of any accredited minister of a recognized church.

First, therefore, let this question be propounded: Did said order of "May 25, 1798," in terms, undertake to absolve Jesse Head from "off the muster role" because he was an accredited minister of some recognized church? Undoubtedly so. If, however, Jesse Head had held "a license" merely as an exhorter it is hardly consistent with sense that the Court Martial would have summarily ordered that Jesse Head be "cleared of (off) muster role." Webster has well said: "There is nothing so powerful as truth and often nothing so strange."

Second, at this date, "May 25, 1798," Jesse Head was 29 years, 11 months and 15 days old (to be exact), and had it not been for the fact that Jesse Head held "a license" as an accredited minister "of the sect to which he belongs," it is unquestioned that the Court Martial would have ordered and directed Jesse Head to continuous service as a malitia-man in the "Fourth Regiment of Kentucky Malitia" until said "delinquent" Jesse Head should attain the full age limit of 50 years, at which latter age all members were discharged. As an example, in the trial just preceding Jesse Head at bar it is there stated and ordered as follows: "From the oath of Anthony Stone filed showing that he will be 50 years old tomorrow, it is ordered and directed that he be cleared of (off) muster role." Therefore, if Rev. Jesse Head was only 30 years of age upon "May 25, 1798," and had not held "a license" as an accredited minister "of the sect to which he belongs;" it would appear inconsistent with human conduct why the Court Martial should instantly absolve him, "cleared of (off) muster role."

Again note carefully the beginning words of this ancient order, to-wit: "Jesse Head returned as delinquent." This language indicates perfectly plain that Jesse Head was coerced before the Court upon executed process—summoned—by an officer. Here is my theory concerning this ancient trial. Jesse Head had removed from outside the bounds (or limits) of his original district where his farm of "50 acres" was located on "Road Run" into Springfield. Upon his arrival in Springfield, and being within proper age limit for Malitia service, Jesse Head was cited by legal process to come and serve, and in the event of failure Jesse Head would be fined in the sum of "nine shilling for each act of delinquency." Evidently Jesse Head was within the clutches of the said Court Martial. The question arises, what saved Rev. Jesse Head, who had been both cited and "returned as delinquent" from the infliction of fine? Exempted alone by "having a license" as an accredited minister "of the sect to which he belongs."

And again this idea may be advanced, that if the State Law and the Governor's commissioned officials gave full recognition to Rev. Jesse Head's "having a license;" why should not the State Law acquiesce and approve the concurrent or harmonizing authority to perform the rites of matrimony? It did in my opinion.

Third, Rev. Jesse Head with the utmost fidelity toward the "license" which loyally acquitted him before the Court Martial, ever thereafter certified the status of all marriages through the official ceremony of the ministry, and never feigned the office of a Justice of the Peace to seal such sacred and holy union.

Fourth, these Court Martial officials were selected and commissioned by the Governor, and all records faithfully kept. Like all courts of record it was then and is now entitled to full faith and credit. Therefore, as the original book exists (in a fire proof safe) which attests Rev. Jesse Head as "having a license," and by reason of such fact was "cleared of (off) muster role" 20 years before full age limit cast him "off"; so, therefore, any question at this date appertaining to the existence of "having a license" in behalf of Rev. Jesse Head's ministry at once relates back to the said original book and duly authenticates from such original existing record that came from the hands and hearts of the Court Martial. Indeed a maxim of our law reiterates a fundamental principle that an ancient judgment stands unimpeached in the full attestation of its truth.

For many years the public has been oppressed with disparaging remarks against the ministry of Rev. Jesse Head—and especially ugly stigmas hurled against the status of marriage in the union of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks—because of false rumors of a mere tradition to the effect that Rev. Jesse Head was an impostor, and any marriage attempted to be solemnized by him void for want of a minister's license of record in the Washington County Court, or elsewhere in any court of record in the Commonwealth. An answer to such distrustful demons is this. Rev. Jesse Head no doubt was given adequate legal advice that as he had been acquitted in this established court of record and before commissioned officials of the Commonwealth; that it was not in accord with justice to heap additional costs upon this humble pioneer minister by coercing him to incur costs again in recording the fact of "having a license" in the Washington County Court. In other words one recording of a license in any court of record was deemed sufficient. Also in pioneer days the Court Martial met frequently, while the County Courts had only sessions. Therefore, this recorded information was of much greater publicity upon the Court Martial record than if actually recorded in the Washington County Court. However, the "ordination" of Rev. Jesse Head by Bishop Asbury on "October 3, 1805", will shortly be reached.

(To be continued June 10, 1921.)

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ARTICLE IN THE LEBANON, (KY.,) ENTERPRISE, JUNE 10, 1921.

Life Sketches of Rev. Jesse Head, Who Married President Lincoln's Parents

BY L. S. PENCE.

Since the publication of the third sketch, many questions have been asked concerning the 123 year judgment wherein Rev. Jesse Head held a license as a minister of the Gospel. It may be interesting to know that the above-mentioned judgment is the only court order where the fact is established that Rev. Jesse Head possessed a minister's license. However, it may be explained at this point that on "Feb. 15, 1805," where a marriage certificate containing eleven couples was returned by Rev. Jesse Head in the Washington County Court, he signed this particular certificate of marriage as follows, to-wit: "Jesse Head, M. M. E. C.," meaning a "Minister Methodist Episcopal Church." This was almost a year before Bishop Asbury ordained Rev. Jesse Head a "deacon" in the Methodist church.

The orders as contained in the Washington County Court continue thus:

"July 1, 1793. Benjamin Hardin and others as 'trustees of the town of Springfield of the first part' hath 'indentured' unto 'Jesse Head of the second part,' two certain lots situated in Springfield, Ky. Rev. Jesse Head had bargained for and had erected a dwelling house and was living in Springfield in May, 1798, some two months before title as above was passed."

"July 3, 1798. Upon the application of Abraham Hite, agent for John Hunter, it is ordered that Jesse Head and Benjamin Hardin be empowered to take depositions, agreeable to an Act of the General Assembly, and also ascertain boundary of lands and for all other purposes." This Benjamin was not the lawyer. I am of the opinion that Benjamin Hardin and Jesse Head were brothers-in-law, although unable to prove such a fact. It will be remembered that Benjamin Hardin originally pre-empted the "50-acre farm" situated next to himself for Jesse Head. This was on "Road Run." Then, next, we see Benjamin Hardin and others (trustees) making title to Jesse Head in Springfield, Ky. Benjamin Hardin's wife bears the same name as the oldest sister of Rev. Jesse Head's wife. In pioneer days kinfolk settled in groups and knit together a kind of uniform protection from depredations of the Indians.

"September term, 1798. Washington County Court of Quarter Sessions." An appeal was prosecuted by Henry Lucas versus Aaron Vancleave from a judgment rendered by Jesse Head, Magistrate. The case was affirmed upon the said appeal.

"April 7, 1799. William Head and Edward Head, orphans of W. E. Head, deceased, came into the court and made choice of Jesse Head as their guardian, which fact is ordered to be recorded." The whole estate was 105 pounds, and divided among 8 heirs.

"Jan. 2, 1800. Ordered and directed that Jesse Head and Josiah Wilson, Esquires, state and settle the accounts of the estate of Burdette Clifton, deceased, and make report to the court." The above decedent was a brother to Baldwin Clifton, who was a pioneer minister, and died in Nelson county before Washington was formed. Burdette Clifton died at the age of 78 years.

"April term, 1800. Washington County Court of Quarter Sessions." In an appeal of James Catlin versus James Whitecotton (Revolutionary soldier) the judgment as rendered by Jesse Head was affirmed. The suit was over an old flint lock gun.

"July 8, 1800. This day came Leroy Smith before me, a Justice of the Peace, and produced a wolf head and took the oath prescribed by law in such cases. Given under my hand the day and year aforesaid. Jesse Head, Justice of the Peace." At this date whoever killed a full grown wolf was paid a sum of money. The oath referred alone to the age of the wolf. "Prescribed by law" meant such fact of full grown wolf.

"May 2, 1802." Jesse Head at this date was "a trustee of the town of Springfield" (Ky.).

"April 3, 1803. Jesse Head was appointed "a commissioner to contract with some proper person to erect posts and rails around the well and public spring of this town and make all necessary repairs to same." So we see by Jesse Head's energy the hogs were fastened out of the town spring. I suspect this was the first industrial order ever put forth in Springfield. Understand, may it please the court, Springfield was our capital at that date.

"June 1, 1803. Jesse Head and John Reed were selected by the heirs of full age to divide the estate of Thomas Head, deceased, agreeable to the law and make report to the court." The decedent was jailer of Washington county for many years.

"June 10, 1803." Jesse Head succeeded Felix Grundy as "president of the Board of Trustees of Springfield." It is interesting to know that Felix Grundy was admitted to practice law in Springfield—his home—on "May 8, 1795." I suspect at the above date, "June 10, 1803," Felix Grundy was making removal to Nashville, Tenn., where he became a celebrated lawyer, and some years later President Jackson appointed him Attorney General of the United States. Among old records once belonging to Rev. Jesse Head can be seen headings: "Office Attorney General United States." Likely Felix Grundy did many a service of friendship for Rev. Jesse Head.

"Dec. 10, 1803." Jesse Head rendered a judgment as magistrate in a very complex legal question concerning "Jurisdiction." From the decision of Jesse Head an appeal was taken to the "Court of Quarter Sessions" and affirmed. From this last decision the matter went direct to the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, and finally affirmed. Excuse our enthusiasm, but Jesse Head was a "wheel-horse" in legal affairs.

"May 20, 1805. Personally came Patrick Morgan before me, a justice of the peace, and made oath that a black mare now in the possession of Richard Beall as executor of Margaret Beall dec'd., was given by said Andrew Beall when it was a colt to affiant, and it was always considered by her as said Morgan's whenever spoken of by decedent to deponent. Given under my hand the day and year above. Jesse Head, Justice of the Peace." This above order was a good "stagger," in pioneer days, to our present day "Order of Delivery," as defined by the Civil Code of Practice.

"Dec. 11, 1808. Ordered that Benedict Spalding sheriff be allowed one dollar for two called courts, and same is ordered for immediate payment." (Signed) "Jesse Head. J. P. W. C."

"May 9, 1809. Ordered that Jesse Head be and he is hereby appointed to make and hang shutters to the lower windows in the court house."

"July 2, 1809. Ordered and directed that Jesse Head paint the window frames and doors of the court house."

"October 10, 1810." Upon this date Jesse Head as "Justice of the Peace" signed the order book of the Washongton County Court for the last time. To make sure that the above date was the correct one, I invited Hon. Joseph Polin, of Springfield, to aid me in this research; and together we confirmed that date as the closing chapter in the official life of Jesse Head in the Magistracy of Washington county.

In my opinion Rev. Jesse Head, in the spring of 1804, left Springfield, and returned to his farm on "Road Run." He was compelled to make this change because of heavy expenses of a large family in town. Rev. Jesse Head had three "orphans" apprenticed to him (likely others by gift of destitute parents) besides a wife and seven children to support. From 1804 to "1810," the date he surrendered as Magistrate, I am convinced that Rev. Jesse Head did the hardest of farm labor. His signature of date "October 10, 1810" attached to the order book of court indicates a farm hand signing; that is to say, the signature was hardly readable; when in actual practice Rev. Jesse Head was an expert penman and an able accountant.

In "1811" the name "Jessye Head" was upon the Assessor's book of Washington county. Likely in the fall of 1811 Rev. Jesse Head bid farewell to his "Road Run" farm and permanently located in Harrodsburg, Ky. The battle of life was always fiercely waged with the old patriot. On May 7, 1811, "Jesse Head" owned "4 acres of land and 3 horses" on assessor's book. After Rev. Jesse Head located in Harrodsburg his son's assistance no doubt was faithfully pledged in the struggle to aid his pioneer and patriotic father.

Jane Ramsey Head.

Wife of Rev. Jesse Head, deserves a noble remembrance. She was of an excellent family and was the youngest of five daughters of Robert and Susanah Ramsey, of Bedford county, Penn. On "Jan. 9, 1789" she was married to Rev. Jesse Head, by the Rev. Bruce, and it is altogether probable that the latter was Rev. Phillip Bruce, a Methodist minister of great distinction and held important duties in parts of Pennsylvania and the states of Maryland and Virginia. Rev. W. E. Arnold, editor of the "Central Methodist," acquaints me with the following facts: In the autobiography of Rev. Jacob Young, a pioneer Methodist preacher of Kentucky, he says: "On Monday I left this delightful neighborhood (Junction of Chapline River with Beech Fork River) and traveled through a broken country, and put up with a gentleman by name of Head. He had a very large family, was a clever man, and had a very pleasant wife." These words "a very pleasant wife" was descriptive of this splendid pioneer woman, and no doubt referred to the wife of Rev. Jesse Head. I venture the opinion that Jane Head had fried chicken for this itinerant Methodist preacher. It may be of interest to inform the readers that in 1786, in the Nelson County Court, that Moses Crume, (one of the very earliest Methodist preachers to invade the District of Kentucky) by order of the court was permitted to erect a grist mill at the mouth of Chaplin River with the Beech Fork. Moses Crume was a minister in (Ky.) Dec., 1802, and his second son, Ralph Crume, married Miss Mary Lincoln (aunt of President Lincoln) daughter of Abraham Lincoln who was killed by the Indians at Greer's station. In May, 1798, Rev. Jesse Head was before the Court Martial at Springfield as a witness for a "delinquent" named "Brazelton." It appears that Brazelton in Feb. 1798, had failed to attend "muster role" because of the fact stated by him: "My wife was suddenly called to bed." The delinquent had Rev. Jesse Head sworn as a witness, and Rev. Jesse Head testified as follows: "My wife was sent for at midnight to go over to his wife's aid and the weather was awful bad." Jane Head risked her life at "midnight" among the perils of wild beasts and savage Indians to go to the aid of her sex. A grand pioneer woman. Another superb trait of this excellent woman was her affectionate care and motherly devotions bestowed upon the "orphans" sheltered in her frontier home. By the Court orders three "orphans" were apprenticed to Rev. Jesse Head (and there might have been others without any order of Court) and Jane Head with her prayers ever hallowed His name in behalf of said innocent "orphans" that they might be useful men and upright citizens in the forthcoming Commonwealth. May the blessed memory of Jane Ramsey Head, like that of her eminent husband, survive all ages.

(To be continued July 8, 1921.)

B
H432p
no.5

ARTICLE IN THE LEBANON, (KY.,) ENTERPRISE, JULY 8, 1921.

Life Sketches of Rev. Jesse Head, Who Married President Lincoln's Parents

BY L. S. PENCE.

The first thing to be done in Sketch 5 is to answer a school girl who asks for this information: "Please give a description of Rev. Jesse Head." The University of Chicago has the only drawing of Rev. Jesse Head known to exist, and through the courtesy of Hon. Edward A. Heney, director of that noted institution, valuable information concerning Rev. Jesse Head is directly given. "The picture is a profile. It shows a large Roman nose, prominent cheek bone, and slightly sunken cheek. So he was evidently tall and lean. The forehead is high and the hair sparse."

Hon. E. A. Heney also interestingly states: "The picture is one of several hundreds which came to us with the library of Colonel Reuben T. Durrett, of Louisville, Ky. There is no note of any sort on it except an ink note: 'Rev. Jesse Head, minister, who married Thomas Lincoln to Nancy Hanks.'"

Miss Mary A. Stephenson, of Harrodsburg, Ky., always conservative and accurate in her research work and well informed upon the pioneer history of Harrodsburg, acquaints me with the following facts found of record in that historic town concerning the Rev. Jesse Head: "In the original trustee book of Harrodsburg, dating from 1786, is contained the record that Jesse Head bought a lot on the site now occupied by the Harrod Hotel. In March, 1810, in the same book mention is made that at a later date he built a shop on this lot. Jesse Head was a carpenter and a cabinet maker of more than ordinary skill for that era."

Mrs. M. E. Sharp, of Mercer county, has in her possession a small mahogany bureau (about 18 by 24) which was made by Jesse Head in 1836. Mrs. Sharp's uncle obtained the bureau from Jesse Head and made a gift of the same to her when she was three years old. ,

Jesse Head's first shop in Harrodsburg was adjacent to an old stone house occupied by Beriah Magoffin, Sr., father of Gov. Magoffin. Later the stone house was remodeled into a tavern and the Head shop presumably removed to another part of the town.

On October 10, 1811, (one year precise from the last signed order by Jesse Head as "Magistrate" of Washington county) Jesse Head was elected a trustee of Harrodsburg to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of George C. Thompson, a prominent citizen of that period. The minutes also show the fact of Jesse Head serving in this capacity until 1815 when a trustee was elected to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Jesse Head, he having removed from the town. But in 1819 he is again mentioned as serving in the capacity of trustee. He was re-elected at different times until 1827, after which date his name does not appear upon the records. While serving as trustee Jesse Head acted as chairman of the board upon frequent occasions. The residence of Rev. Jesse Head for some years before his death, as ascertained from reliable tradition, was situated on north Main street between the Norfleet and Harbison property. His shop was with his residence during his later years.

In 1830 Rev. Jesse Head with his son's aid edited in Harrodsburg a paper called "The American" (see Acts 1830). Whether or not the venture was a financial success does not at this remote date seem to be known. Bascome Head, Sr., (called "printer," son of Jesse Head) had a long career in journalism. On "March 20, 1886," the "Harrodsburg Democrat," in speaking of the death of this energetic man said: "He had a career 'at the case' for more than 65 years and even in his old age he was considered the swiftest compositor in Harrodsburg. He had many warm friends among the older citizens. He was a son of Jesse Head, a pioneer preacher, who married Thomas Lincoln to Nancy Hanks."

Miss Stephenson concludes as follows: "The Rev. Jesse Head was an important factor in the regulation and upbuilding of Harrodsburg, from the most reliable tradition. In the County Court records of Mercer county can be found many marriage returns duly certified by Rev. Jesse Head. In that early era above mentioned, when death took a pioneer from his toils in the community of Harrodsburg, the Rev. Jesse Head made the coffin and preached the funeral.

Rev. Jesse Head As Minister.

Tradition says that Rev. Jesse Head came over the "old wilderness" road into Washington county and in a few years after arriving in his frontier home began preaching the doctrine of Methodism to the frontiersman. However, the exact date when the ministry of Rev. Jesse Head began is unknown. In the first sketch the name of Rev. Jesse Head was peculiarly associated with that of the "itinerant" preacher. This was error, for when he was ordained a "deacon" by Bishop Asbury it is expressly stated: "Rev. Jesse Head a local preacher."

At the early date when Rev. Jesse Head preached at the various stations in Washington county and adjacent stations, there was no controversy about "salvation by faith" or "salvation by works," for there was no confusion of the meaning of the word "faith."

The Revolutionary War had previously ended and Methodist theology thus fitted in exactly with the emphasis of an actual equality among all men. Indeed not only the Methodist settlers brought with them their religious ideals, but the same year that Kentucky was admitted into Statehood, the first Roman Catholic church was established within less than a score of miles of Springfield, and in the new county of Washington. Also other denominations in this section built churches. The wonderful zeal of the new settlers soon had churches established in various localities. In a very short time after Holy Cross church was founded by Father Wm. de Rohan it is worthy to note that the officials of Washington county had a county road opened from said "chapel" (word used in the order) in two directions. First, in the direction of Pottinger's creek settlement and out to the "old trail" at Leonard Mattingly's, extending onward to John Lancaster's and Joseph Dant's and Francis Mudd's plantations. No locality ever enjoyed a more enduring friendship or excelled in religious influences than the above section while Fathers de Rohan, Badin, Salmon, Fournier and others piloted the Roman Catholic church, and stations along the Rolling Fork river; and the ministers, Terah Templin, Thomas Kyle, Barnabas McHenry, John Harper and Jesse Head, who piloted the faith of Protestantism upon the other hand. The new county of Washington—the first piece of territory ever named for George Washington — was cradled in an atmosphere of effective influence of Christianity.

While, perhaps, a little off of the subject, yet I want to say this: Taking the many orders of the County Court of Nelson county from 1788 to 1792 (when Washington county was formed), there was more enterprise in the opening of "public roads"; and more development in erecting "grist mills;" and in a general welfare of "improvement and upbuilding" within a radius of 15 miles around Springfield than prevailed in any other section of the new Commonwealth, not excluding Harrodsburg and Lexington, much older settlements.

Rev. Jesse Head, while in Washington county, had in his make-up as much of the spirit of an apostle as rested in any man wrestling to upbuild his Maker's cause in a primitive country. Rev. Jesse Head was a man of "strong character and not afraid to speak the truth at all times and under any circumstances," and his sentiment regarding slavery in its earliest agitations was pronounced against such an institution. And while the Assessor's book in Washington county in 1794, and years thereafter included Bigger Head, W. E. Head and Priscilla Head as enlisted slave owners, yet Rev. Jesse Head instead of holding "slaves" had "apprenticed" three "orphan boys" to nurture and instruct and champion toward truth and earnest manhood for the new Commonwealth.

Kind readers, Rev. Jesse Head did lots more good in the wilderness of Washington county toward a fearless denunciation of wrong doing than the world in general ever gave him credit.

An amusing incident in the life of Rev. Jesse Head is told from tradition, how with his oddity and thoughtlessness he made a laughable blunder while preaching a sermon at the Pottenger creek settlement, almost a century and a quarter ago. The incident is as follows: In those days pack saddles were extensively used. The pack saddle was a rude contrivance made of the forked branch of a tree, in keeping with the primitive simplicity of the times, and when fastened upon a horse it became the receptacle of the goods and chattels to be carried. Pack saddles were extensively used as a means of transportation at that era. Any branch of a tree which could be made into such a saddle was an attractive object. Upon one occasion while preaching a sermon at the above named settlement and when almost at the climax of his subject he paused in his sermon with his eyes fixed at the top of a red elm tree and pointing up said: "I want to remark right here that yonder is one of the best forks for a pack saddle I ever saw in the woods."

By the peep of day the next morning (which was Monday) Rev. Jesse Head procured the pack saddle and was off on the "old gray" mare for home. But with all of his blunders and oddities there was never a more energetic preacher to uphold good morals among the settlers. He endeavored to raise his country by the lever of religion.

(To b finished August 12, 1921.)

6- B H432P No.6

ARTICLE IN THE LEBANON, (KY.,) ENTERPRISE, SEPTEMBER 16, 1921.

Life Sketches of Rev. Jesse Head, Who Married President Lincoln's Parents

BY L. S. PENCE.

This last sketch (No. 6) of the life of Rev. Jesse Head should have been inserted on August 12, 1921, but on account of a severe illness of the writer, the concluding sketch comes one month later. A review of the life of this earnest and pious pioneer Methodist preacher has been a pleasant task among the researches of Washington county's early history.

The Rev. Jesse Head began his service with the Methodist church in or about the year 1798. Upon "October 3, 1805" Rev. Jesse Head was ordained by Bishop Francis Asbury a "deacon" in the Methodist Episcopal church at "Houston's Chapel in Scott county, Kentucky." In a recent publication (1920) entitled "The Rise of Methodism in the West" the following proceeding concerning Rev. Jesse Head, at page 101, is outlined from the "Western Conference of 1805" which reads as follows: "Date of October 3, 1805. Who are ordained deacons? Answer: Jesse Head, a local preacher" (and eight others.) Rev. Jesse Head was likely a local preacher and not an itinerant preacher by the fact of his having such a large family.

The ordination of Rev. Jesse Head as a "deacon" in the Methodist Episcopal church by Bishop Asbury took place one year before the famous "marriage certificate" was written and signed by "Rev. Jesse Head, D. M. E. C.," wherein is given the form of matrimony solemnized between Thos. Lincoln and Nancy Hanks. The recent unearthing of the ordination of Rev. Jesse Head by Bishop Asbury shows an authenticated and lawful right of performing the rites of matrimony was conferred upon him through the Methodist church.

So, therefore, at the date, "June 12, 1806," when Rev. Jesse Head married President Lincoln's parents, he had the Methodist church authority of a "deacon" in addition to the original right of a "minister."

However, it appears from every certificate signed and returned into the Washington County Clerk's office, after "October 3, 1805," that Jesse Head used alone the office of "deacon" in making returns upon certificates of marriage.

There appears two certificates of marriage purporting to have duly issued and signed by Rev. Jesse Head which read as follows:

"I do hereby certify that by authority of license issued by the Clerk's office of Washington county I have solemnized the rites of matrimony between Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, June 12, 1806, A. D., agreeable to the rites and ceremonies of the Methodist Episcopal church. Witness my hand.

"Jesse Head, Dn., M. E. C.."

The above certificate Miss Tarbell used in her book, "Early Life of Lincoln." Both the Clerk and Deputy of the Washington County Court denied all knowledge regarding the above certificate, when on June 28, 1921, I asked to inspect the said alleged certificate.

The second alleged certificate reads thus:

"I do certify that on the 22d day of September, 1806, I solemnized the rites of matrimony between Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, according to the rites of the Methodist Episcopal church.

"Jesse Head, D., M. E. C."

Also the Clerk and Deputy could give no information whatever regarding this last certificate when interrogated at Springfield, Ky., on June 28, 1921. Every certificate was examined that had been signed and returned into the Washington County Court by Rev. Jesse Head, but no trace whatever could be found of this last alleged certificate.

The marriage bond executed by Thomas Lincoln reads as follows: "Know all men by these presents that we, Thomas Lincoln and Richard Berry, are held and firmly bound unto his Excellency the Governor of Kentucky for the just and full sum of fifty pounds current money to the payment of which well and truly to be made to the said Governor and his successors we bind ourselves and our heirs, &c., jointly and severally firmly by these presents sealed with our seals and dated this June 10, 1806. The condition of this obligation is such that whereas there is a marriage shortly intended between the above bound Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks for which a license has issued now if there be no lawful cause to obstruct the said marriage then this obligation to be void or else to remain in full force and virtue in law.

"Thomas Lincoln (Seal)

"Richard Berry (Seal)"

"Witness, John H. Parrott."

Two days after the above marriage bond was issued Rev. Jesse Head, at the home of Richard Berry, in Washington county, Ky., performed the marriage that united Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks as husband and wife. A copy of the famous "marriage certificate" reads as follows:

"I do hereby certify that the following is a true list of marriages solemnized by me, the subscriber, from the 28th day of April, 1806, until the date hereof:

"June 25, 1806, joined together in the holy estate of matrimony, agreeable to the rules of the M. E. C., Morris Berry and Peggy Simms.

"November 27, 1806, David Mays and Hannah Peters.

"March 5, 1807, Charles Ridge and Annie Davis.

"March 24, 1807, John Head and Sally Clark.

"March 27, 1807, Benjamin Clark and Dolly Head.

"January 14, 1807, Edward Pile and Rosannah McMahon.

"December 22, 1806, Silas Chamberlain and Betsey West.

"June 17, 1807, John Springer and Elizabeth Ingram.

"June 12, 1806, THOMAS LINCOLN and NANCY HANKS.

"September 23, 1806 John Cambron and Hannah White.

"October 2, 1806, Anthony Litsey and Rhoda Pirtle.

"October 23, 1806, Aaron Harding and Hannah Botts.

"April 7, 1807, Daniel Payne and Christine Price.

"July 24, 1806, Benjamin Clark and Dolly Clark.

"May ——, 1806, Hugh Haskins and Betsey Dyer.

"September 24, 1806, John Graham and Catherine Jones.

"Given under my hand this 22d day of April, 1807.

"Jesse Head, D. M. C. E."

In Washington county, Ky., from 1805 until September, 1810, Rev. Jesse Head married some 150 couples. In Mercer county he also married many couples.

Twenty-two years ago I attended a friend's marriage at the Catholic church in Lebanon. The excellent priest, in the ceremony, stressed the fact to the contracting parties that God had planned their lives and destinies to meet at the altar for the glory of the church and usefulness of the Nation. I believed the well chosen words of the priest. Now I further believe in the utterance I am going to announce, to-wit: That Rev. Jesse Head, aided and directed by Divine influences, traveled over the "wilderness road" from Maryland into the wilds of Washington county, Ky., to become a "deacon" in his selected church where he officiated at the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, and from the union of this couple a son was born who should lead a Nation from the shackles of slavery and bondage to freedom; and this ordained with as much certainty of Divine inspiration as was the mission of John Baptist. The whole world joined in a spirit that the American slaves should be free.

Rev. Jesse Head never lived to see the achievements for humanity that Abraham Lincoln, born to the parents whose union was cemented as husband and wife by the "deacon's" words, wrought as the Chief Magistrate in the moral forces of this Nation.

Rev. Jesse Head died in March, 1842, years before the lustre of the mighty Lincoln grew to renown and fame, even in the debates with the great Stephen A. Douglas.

Like the appearance of the hand of God in the writing at Belshazzar's feast, we behold that twenty-three years from the death of Rev. Jesse Head that President Lincoln penned the Declaration of Emancipation, thereby carrying out the abolition of slavery that was set like a flint in Rev. Jesse Head's mind. It should be made clear that no conflict of human obligation and of Divine will ever crossed in complete fidelity to the Nation's welfare.

In 1908 Congress erected at Hodgenville, Ky., a costly memorial to the birthplace of President Lincoln. Congress, however, omitted a plain duty in behalf of Rev. Jesse Head in failure to erect in the public square at Springfield, Ky., (only a stone's throw from Hodgenville) a marble slab, six feet wide at the base, ten feet in height and broad enough in surface to contain in full the famous "marriage certificate" penned by Rev. Jesse Head in Washington county, Kentucky.

Rev. Jesse Head was truly one included in the noble array of those who, for the promotion of righteousness and truth among men, did endure hardness to face the trying experiences of pioneer times to give positive proof of love that is found in sacrifice for humanity.

Rev. Jesse Head sleeps in an unmarked grave in the cemetery at Harrodsburg, Ky., but, in the words of Lincoln, "His name and fame shall not perish from the earth."